The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

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AGITATE !
EDUCATE !
ORGANIZE !

VOL. 8. NO. 21. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 1918. WHOLE NO. 385.

U. S. STEEL INDUSTRY WILL BE ORGANIZED

Chicago, Aug. 17.—Under instructions of the last convention of the A. F. of L., President Gompers called a conference of representatives of iron and steel trade unions to arrange for a nation-wide organizing campaign against the steel trust.

The following international unions were represented at this conference: Blacksmiths, boiler makers, electrical workers, machinists, molders, quarrymen, seamen, stationary firemen, steam engineers, structural iron workers, railway carmen, plumbers and steam fitters, steam shovel and dredgemen; mine, mill, and smeltermen and iron, steel and tin workers. Representatives of the Chicago federation of labor and building trades council were also present.

A national committee was formed and President Gompers was selected chairman and W. Z. Foster, representing the railway carmen, secretary-treasurer. This committee will consist of one member of the co-operating internationals and will have complete charge of the campaign.

The committee has invited other internationals to join in this movement. Offices will be established and local organizing committees will be set up in Pittsburg, Cleveland, Chicago, Bethlehem, Youngstown, Buffalo, Alabama and Minnesota, and as the campaign progresses, in other strongholds of the steel interests.

NO GLASS IN BREAD.

Washington, Aug. 17.—The national food administration reprints a statement by the Indiana state council of defense that "almost without exception the authorities have been unable to verify the rumors of glass in bread," which were given such wide circulation a few months ago.

The Indiana state council of defense gives this reason for the excitement:

"Corn flour under the microscope, shows many hard, flinty pieces of endosperm (germ), which have a very glassy appearance. When baked in a quick oven some of these particles retain their glasslike appearance, though in the ordinary process of baking this appearance is lost. This is the explanation given by experts employed by the International Union of Bakers and Confectionery Workers.

"In bran flours a nervous person might easily fancy that particles of the hard outer husk were glass. And dextrine sometimes solidifies into a hard, transparent mass, which might be mistaken for glass.

"The natural conclusion is that most of the people who reported having found glass in their bread were deceived by the appearance of the new materials."

RENT BARONS CHECKED.

Washington, Aug. 17.—The District of Columbia council of defense has notified all tenants to "stand pat" against the efforts of landlords to raise rents, as the Salisbury law, recently passed by congress, prohibits rent raising in the district.

The council is endeavoring to impress upon people living in the nation's capital that a written or verbal agreement made with a landlord prior to May 31 last stands to the end of the war, and that if tenants offer the monthly rent paid heretofore they can not be evicted until after the war ends. The law is drawn in such a way that profiteering landlords are helpless if tenants will but stand on their rights under this statute.

RETIREMENT BILL URGED.

Washington, Aug. 17.—In urging the house committee on interstate and foreign commerce to favor the Keating-McKellar civil service retirement bill, trade unionists introduced to the committee one woman who has been employed for 42 years in the war department and is unable to stop work because of lack of funds.

ELECTRICIANS STRIKE.

Fort Worth, Tex., Aug. 17.—A strike of 200 electrical workers followed a refusal by the Texas Light and Power company to consider the demands of these workers for increased wages and improved working conditions.

SAYS MEAT PACKERS ARE "CONSPIRATORS"

Washington, Aug. 17.—Not content with its recent report on profiteering by metal, flour, leather, lumber, sulphur and other interests, the federal trade commission has fired a broadside at the five large packing firms—Swift, Armour, Morris, Cudahy and Wilson—who are termed "conspirators," and whose business practices reflect on American claims of regard for law.

These government officials declare that their investigators have met every obstacle that the packers' ingenuity and money could devise to impede them.

"We had to meet schools for witnesses," it is stated, "where employes were coached in anticipation of their being called to testify; we had to meet deliberate falsification of returns properly required under legal authority; we had to meet a situation created by the destruction of letters and documents vital to this investigation, and we had to meet a conspiracy in the preparation of answers to the lawful inquiries of this commission."

The report says that "some show of competition is staged by the five great packers, but that is superficial and unreal."

"How sham it is," say the investigators, "will be fully set out in the accompanying summary and the complete reports. Some independent packers exist by sufferance, and a few hardy ones have survived in real competition. Around such few of these as remain the lines are drawing in."

Because of this law-defying attitude of these business men the commission recommends that all refrigerator cars, warehouses and other equipment be placed under government supervision.

LAUNDRY WORKERS GAIN.

San Francisco, Aug. 17.—Representatives of the Laundry Workers' union and the Laundry Owners' association have agreed to a general wage increase of $2 a week for employes, regardless of classification.

AFTER-WAR PROBLEM CONCERNS FARMING

New York, Aug. 17.—To give our returned soldiers an opportunity to live a bigger and more independent life, this country must develop its natural resources for the soldier's and the nation's good and Uncle Sam must become their banker, their partner and their best friend while he is doing so.

The above summarizes Secretary of the Interior Lane's views on readjustment problems, as stated by Wesley McCormick, in a special article published in the New York World.

"It has been officially estimated," said Secretary Lane, "that more than 15,000,000 acres of irrigable lands now remain in the government's hands. Large as the figure may seem, this is only an item in the resources to which I refer. There are seventy or eighty million acres of swamp and overflowed land in the country, most of which is privately owned, but which, without government action, will always remain worthless. There are, in addition, perhaps 200,000,000 acres of cut-over land, once wooded, but now worthless or almost so, which nothing short of a gigantic national project could reclaim.

"Why not reclaim these lands? Why not transform them into fertile farms and beautiful homesteads? The war has taught us that we can do it if we will, and it has also taught us the necessity.

"There is a reason, a sufficient reason, why the farms cannot attract the city bred and why they cannot even hold their own young men. People do not flock to the cities because they prefer the smoke and noise, but because the city seems to them to be the center of things and the farm seems so far away from the life of the world.

"If we are to meet the situation before it becomes a crisis, we must not only turn our attention toward making agriculture pay, in the strictly economic sense, but we must see if the inspirations and attractions of world-life cannot be brought to the farm. I believe they can. I believe the economic and spiritual disadvantages of the farm can both be overcome by the almost magic touch of co-operation."

UNION SHIP YARDS LEAD.

Washington, Aug. 17.—Pacific coast steel ship yards have repeated their initial record in May, and again lead steel ship yards of the country in the pennant contest for June, according to the United States shipping board emergency fleet corporation.

The blue pennant has been awarded to the Skinner & Eddy corporation, Seattle; the red pennant to the Bethlehem ship building corporation (formerly Union iron works), San Francisco, and the white pennant to the Columbia River Ship Building company, Portland.

These concerns are thoroughly unionized. At a wage hearing recently the management of the Skinner & Eddy plant announced that union workers produced results. On July 27 this concern launched an 8,800-ton vessel in 49 working days after the keel was laid. The government reports that "it was the Skinner & Eddy corporation that built the first vessel in record time which, on its first trip abroad, was pronounced perfect by English ship builders.

"This has gone far," says these government officials, "to silence criticism directed at fast work in building ships."

NEW COMPENSATION AWARD.

Albany, N. Y., Aug. 17.—The New York state industrial commission has made an interesting ruling in the case of a paper mill worker who was injured while sleeping.

It was shown that the employe was ordered by a foreman to lay down and rest. A tram car left its tracks and struck the sleeping man, and his claim for compensation benefits was resisted by the company on the ground that if he had not been careless he would not have been injured. The state industrial commission ruled against the company and held that as the claimant had been told to lie down he had a right to expect the car would not leave the track. That it did so, was one of the risks of business.

JULY ACCIDENTS GAIN.

St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 17.—The state department of labor and industries reports that there were 2,610 accidents in this state during July, as compared with 2,158 during the same period last year. Accidents to women were 90. There were 20 fatal accidents in the following industries: Mining 12, garages two and one each for logging, steel rails, cartage and storage, public utilities, metal products and erecting.

The July accidents, distributed according to industrial groups, were as follows: Total mining and quarrying, 775; total manufacturing, 1,486; total transportation and public utilities, 296; total trade, 219; total service, 82; total miscellaneous, 3.

WAGE LAW VIOLATED.

Sacramento, Cal., Aug. 17.—The state labor commissioner's office is receiving complaints that fruit and vegetable canneries in this locality are making no pretense of observing the state minimum wage law for women and minors. This law provides for 16 cents an hour for girls. In one case a girl worked three days and was paid 5 cents. The company held out for caps, aprons, brass name check and other accessories that it deems necessary in the handling of fruit and vegetables.

TEAMSTERS' ROLL JUMPS.

Indianapolis, Aug. 17.—During the month of May the offices of the Brotherhood of Teamsters received per capita tax on 82,789 members. President Tobin says this is the largest per capita tax ever received, although thousands of members have been called to the front. From Truck Drivers' union No. 25 of Boston over 600 members have enlisted.

MUST USE ENGLISH.

Madison, Wis., Aug. 17.—Attorney General Haven has ruled that notices of election must be printed in the English language. He holds that the English language is the language of the country and that the statute fully intends that the election notices should be published in the language of the country.

STATE BUILDERS TO MEET.

Gary, Ind., Aug. 17.—The Indiana state building trades council will hold a convention in this city, beginning September 24.

LEAD POISONING STOPS LIBERTY BOND BUYING

Washington, Aug. 17.—In investigating conditions at the lead smelter plant of the St. Joseph Lead company, in Herculaneum, Md., the national war labor board found that low wages and sickness through lead poisoning caused many of these workers to default in their liberty bond payments.

The efficiency of the plant had likewise suffered from an enormous labor turnover, some times as high as 200 per cent annually, partly because of low wages.

Joint Chairmen Taft and Walsh acted as arbitrators in this case. They found that wages were so low that savings were impossible and that the union supported victims of lead posioning, who "had suffered an alarming number of workless days through sickness." In ordering a minimum wage of $4 a day, the arbitrators were guided by the war labor board's principle that "minimum rates of pay shall be established which will insure the subsistence of the worker and his family in health and reasonable comfort." The award is retroactive and dates back to April 21.

The arbitrators also ordered collective bargaining, and 50 per cent additional pay for the first two hours in excess of eight hours and double pay for additional hours, as well as for Sundays and holidays.

As in all other awards by the board it is here provided that rates may be readjusted every six months to conform with living costs.

The plant produces one ninth of all the lead mined in this country, and it has been operated on a seven-day basis since the war.

BONUS SYSTEM WRONG.

Washington, Aug. 17.—Fuel Administrator Garfield has notified coal operators that they must abandon their bonus system as it causes unrest and labor shifts and does not increase the coal output.

"Maximum production," he says, "is essential to the successful conduct of the war and for the welfare of the boys in the trenches. The democracy we are seeking to establish at home and abroad demands that maximum production be based on an arrangement fair to all concerned—to all mine workers, all operators, and all the public.

"The payment of bonuses in any form is contrary to the spirit of the wage agreements made by operators and mine workers with the president of the United States last November. These agreements covered the period of the war. With full confidence, therefore, that the fuel administration will have the support of all associations and individuals in curbing violations of that agreement, I hereby announce that if any operator hereafter undertakes to pay a bonus in any form in violation of the terms or spirit of the agreements above referred to, I shall assume that the mine price of coal allowed that operator is too high and I shall accordingly order a reduction thereof.

"Also, I am directing investigation of alleged payments of bonuses now or since the November agreement, and shall make such further orders and regulations as the facts may justify."

RAINCOAT GRAFT HALTED.

New York, Aug. 17.—Uncle Sam does not propose to have his soldiers contract pneumonia and other ills because of the profiteering and grafting of raincoat makers, and he has ordered an inspection of all military raincoats held in this city for shipment. Government agents, last week, reported that they examined 55,587 coats, manufactured by 19 different concerns, and that 28,625, or slightly in excess of 51 per cent, were found to be unfit for service. In one instance 80 per cent of the coats made by one concern were defective, while in several other cases two out of every three coats were rejected. The inspection will be continued until every coat is passed upon.

To date 22 arrests have been made in connection with this meanest form of graft.

Washington, Aug. 17.—The war department has canceled all contracts with the firms and individuals connected with fraud, bribery and corruption in the selling of raincoats to the government. All supplies and raw material will be seized and new contracts will be let to parties not involved in these frauds.

WOMEN REPLACE MEN.

Washington, Aug. 17.—The department of labor states that in June, 1918, the number of women in England that had directly replaced men in industry and commerce had increased to 1,442,000. In government establishments, not including controlled establishments engaged in munitions work, they formed 36 per cent of the total employes; in banking and finance, 34.6 per cent; in commercial occupations, 16.2 per cent; in engineering firms, 7.14 per cent, and in all metal trades, 6 per cent.

These figures refer only to the women directly replacing men. Many others are engaged in work in which they replace only partially or indirectly men who have been withdrawn.

WANT DISQUE REMOVED.

Seattle, Aug. 17.—Trade unionists in this city have petitioned Secretary of War Baker to remove Col. Disque unless that official ceases his opposition to organized labor and either proves his statements that ship builders are slacking or acknowledges that this assertion is untrue.

The army official is in charge of the production of spruce lumber for airplanes, and the unionists charge that the loyal legion of loggers and lumbermen, which he organized, is an anti-union institution.

CAN'T QUIT BUSINESS.

Baltimore, Aug. 17.—Food Administrator Maltbie has refused permission to a wholesale and retail ice dealer to give up his retail business because it is no longer profitable. The food administrator ordered him to serve the public and assured him a reasonable profit.

AGAINST PRIVATE CONTROL.

Boston, Aug. 17.—The state constitutional convention has passed a resolution designed to give public control of the state's natural resources.

The convention finally rejected the resolution to extend the power of the state so as to provide homes for its citizens.

BARTENDERS GAIN.

New Haven, Conn., Aug. 17.—The Bartenders' union has secured a new agreement with a minimum rate of $21 a week.

LABOR BOARD JOLTS PEONAGE IN ALABAMA

Washington, Aug. 17.—Peonage in Alabama and elsewhere has been given a blow by the national war labor board, which orders that employes of the Sloss-Sheffield Steel and Iron company at Russellville, Ala., shall be treated as human beings. Other companies are included in a denunciation of a "permit system" by which employers in that district agree with each other not to hire a man until he can produce a permit from the company which last employed him.

Other orders to the Sloss-Sheffield company are:

Accept the principle of collective bargaining.

Establish the eight-hour day, with time and one-half for overtime.

Stop deducting 20 per cent for cashing advance pay checks for employes.

Stop the insurance system which provides for deductions from the workers' pay.

Money due workers shall be paid at face value with no deductions.

Increase wages of all employes $2 a day. (Former rates varied from $1.85 to $4.25 a day, with the bulk of the employes receiving from $2 to to $3 for a 10-hour day.)

At the hearings it was shown that the company operates a store from which the workers purchase virtually all of the necessities of life, and that many of the workers receive less than $1 a week in their pay envelopes every two weeks because of these deductions and other charges, which include hospital service, company physician and for the maintenance of a school.

With the right of organization assured, the workers are now in a position where they can correct other evils. The national war labor board will not depend on the company to enforce this award, but has directed that an examiner shall be appointed "to supervise the execution of the award."

LABOR CONDITIONS.

Washington, Aug. 17.—Labor conditions for the week ended August 3 is summarized as follows by the department of labor:

Building trades passing through a period of depression. Activity at ship building and manufacturing centers had previously promised to absorb the workers, but high cost of material and difficulty in obtaining it delays operation. Munitions workers are in demand, as are skilled boiler makers, machinists and molders. Common labor is short in the east, but in the south central states the release of men from farm work and the drouths has created a surplus. The question of farm laborers is one of distribution. There is a surplus of these workers in the southern and southwestern states, while a scarcity exists in other sections. In general female labor conditions are normal, with a surplus of women desiring clerical work.

It is felt that a better supply of workers would be available for factories and munitions plants if working conditions were improved.

LABOR TURNOVER COSTLY.

Washington, Aug. 17.—In an address to newspaper men in this city Secretary of Labor Wilson said that "the individualistic strike—the turnover of labor—brings us greater loss than all of the collective strikes and lockouts that occur in the country, and anything that we can do to reduce that turnover of labor will assist in maintaining efficiency."

The cabinet official indicated that the present high wages have not placed workers in the profiteering class, and one of the reasons for the big inflow of labor to large cities has been the inability of the average laborer to grasp real money value, or real wage values.

"They figure it purely upon a monetary basis rather than upon a real basis, the basis of purchasing power," he said. "And so the wage that is held up to the rural worker as being paid in New York, for instance, or in Boston, or in Philadelphia, seems to him to be a tremendous wage rate, and it is a lure to him to come to our cities."

WILL "EXPERTS" SAVE US?

Bismarck, N. D., Aug. 17.—The North Dakota Bar association is willing to take over the legislative functions of this state and suggests that all proposed laws be submitted to its committee for inspection and criticism. The committee will "oppose or aid in the passage of such laws so submitted or proposed."

The association believes that this will result in legislation that will stand judicial scrutiny.

Trade unionists ask how this plan would work in the case of the Keating child-labor law, which was approved by congress and its many lawyer members. When the law reached the United States supreme court it was declared void by the closest possible vote—5 to 4.

SAYS LABOR IS PROPERTY.

Boston, Aug. 17.—The state constitutional convention has refused to reconsider its rejection of the following:

"The labor of a human being shall not be deemed to be a commodity or article of commerce. And the legislature shall not pass a law nor the courts construe any law of the commonwealth contrary to this declaration."

The convention also rejected a resolution regulating the issuance of injunctions in labor disputes.

The committee on the bill of rights rejected a resolution "to prevent the granting of special privileges and creating class distinctions among the people of the commonwealth."

BIG CLEVELAND STRIKE WON.

Cleveland, O., Aug. 17.—By winning a strike that involved 4,000 employes the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union has broken the backbone to trade unionism in this industry. Government statistics show that these employers paid the lowest wage in the country, but a strike that tied up their plants was necessary to convince them that their employes' claim was just.

COPPER MINERS GAIN.

Jerome, Ariz., Aug. 17.—Hywel Davies, representing the United States department of labor, has ruled that the wage of copper miners in this district shall be increased 75 cents a day. He also orders a reduction in rents of company-owned houses and light and water rates.

CARPENTERS RAISE RATES.

San Diego, Cal., Aug. 17.—The Carpenters' union is enforcing its new wage rate of $6 a day.

FEDERAL EDUCATOR APPEALS TO UNIONS

Washington, Aug. 17.—In a letter to officers of international unions and central labor bodies, United States Commissioner of Education Claxton calls attention to the Americanizing policy of his department.

These startling figures are submitted to impress upon trade unionists the necessity for education and agitation of this subject:

"In 1910 there were in the United States approximately 13,00,000 foreign-born persons and about 20,000,000 more with one or more parents born in foreign countries. About 3,000,000 of the foreign-born over 10 years of age could not speak English and about 1,650,000 could not read or write in any language. Nearly 50 per cent of the foreign-born population were males of voting age, but only four in every 1,000 attended school to learn our language and citizenship. Over 4,000,000 additional aliens were admitted between 1910 and 1915. About 1,500 foreign language newspapers, with an approximate total circulation of 10,000,000 are printed in the United States."

Attention is called to the thousands of men of foreign countries who are enrolled in America's fighting forces, and trade unionists are asked to assist the foreign-born in industry to better understand American ideals. Commissioner Claxton suggests that labor day celebrations will afford opportunity to call attention to this matter in connection with the slogan "win the war for freedom."

JOHN D., JR., IS JUBILANT.

New York, Aug. 17.—Mr. Rockefeller, junior, has returned to this city after a two-weeks' visit to his Colorado Fuel and Iron company property. He is enthusiastic over the success of his "union" of employes and testifies to the worth of what his publicity agents term the "Colorado plan."

The world is informed that baths are actually being installed in many houses, and, best of all, gardens are maintained since the company permits its "hands" to select representatives who will present grievances to the boss.

As the "Colorado plan" depends upon the good will of the employer rather than on the united strength and intelligence of the workers, Mr. Rockefeller's statement differs from announcements of gains by organized labor and is treated accordingly by the public press.

This semblance of collective bargaining is now recognized by the Colorado Fuel and Iron company after a strike of organized miners, four years ago. The company created such a state of industrial, legislative and judicial anarchy throughout Colorado that it was forced to abandon its refusal to meet employes and make slight concessions to the spirit of the age. It now maintains a welfare system without cost to its employes—that is, the employes pay no direct cost.

As a reminder of the miners' fight there now stands at Ludlow, Col., a monument erected by the United Mine Workers, on which is inscribed these words:

"In memory of the men, women and children who lost their lives in freedom's cause at Ludlow, Col., April 20, 1914."

VIOLATE CONTRACT.

Moberly, Mo., Aug. 17.—Officers of District No. 25, United Mine Workers of America, protest against the profiteering methods and violation of contracts by southwestern coal operators, who are charged with not being satisfied with making fabulous fortunes at this time and who seek to destroy conditions secured by the United Mine Workers.

"It seems to us," say these unionists, "that the operators are desirous of taking advantage of the mine workers on account of our loyalty and devotion to our country. They know that it would place us in an embarrassing position to do anything at this time that would disturb or hamper in the least the production of coal, and it is our opinion that the operators are seeking to take advantage of this situation."

The miners announce that they will not call a strike, but they make the significant statement that "some day in the future they (the operators) will be compelled to respect the contract that they now seek to ignore."

BUSINESS MEN MUDDLE.

St. Joseph, Mo., Aug. 17.—Members of the Fire Fighters' union object to city officials inviting the Commerce club to assist in drafting rules for the government of the city fire department. The fire fighters declare they have nothing against these business men, "but," they say, "we do not think they know any more about running the fire department than we know about running a bank or a jobbing house."

The firemen are underpaid and they are in no mood to accept the theory that business men or their attorneys possess especial wisdom in handling fire apparatus.

NATIONAL BANKS PROSPER.

Washington, Aug. 17.—Clear profits of national banks for the last six months of last year were $100,000,000, or approximately 20 per cent on the capital stock of all national banks in this country.

For the first seven months of the present year not one of these banks has failed. Never before in the history of the national banks since 1870 (with the single exception of 1881) has there been such immunity from failures.

EXPOSE HIGH WAGE YARN.

Seattle, Aug. 17. — Boiler Makers' union No. 104 has run down one of the wild yarns regarding high wages received by ship builders in this locality. One story claimed that an employe in the Skinner & Eddy plant earned $115 in a single day. Investigation showed that the wage was earned by four riveters. It was also found that the next day these workers were decidedly shy of "pep."

CAN PREVENT ACCIDENTS.

Seattle, Aug. 17.—In urging employers to become imbued with the "safety first" idea, C. W. Price, of Chicago, told business men of this city that accidents have been reduced 75 per cent where education and preventive methods are applied.

IRON WORKERS GAIN.

Savannah, Ga., Aug. 17.—Machinists, boiler makers and blacksmiths have established the eight-hour day and secured double time for overtime, improved working conditions and a 72-cent minimum.

"CAN'T-STRIKE" LAW DON'T DELIVER GOODS

Ottawa, Ontario, Aug. 17.—The Canadian "can't-strike" law has cracked, and by the appointment of a commission to review awards under this act, the government acknowledges that the strikeless millenium, through legislation, is not in sight.

The official title of the "can't-strike" law is the "Canadian industrial disputes investigating act," or popularly known as the Lemieux act to the public generally and as the "lemon" act to organized workers. It was passed in 1907 and makes strikes against public utilities illegal where the government is not given time to appoint a commission to investigate and make an award. When the law was passed it was given wide publicity as the solution of differences between capitalists and workers, and Mackenzie King, who is credited with being its sponsor, and who later joined hands with the Rockefeller interests, imported the idea to Colorado.

The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada has condemned the law. The unionists say that the time the government demands before a strike is legal is used by employers to strengthen their lines and secure strikebreakers. Another charge against the law is that too much time is used by the conciliators, which is taken advantage of by the employers.

The government's new plan to patch up the law is a commission of five—two employes, and two employers, they to selected a chairman—whose decisions shall be final. While many trade unionists are dubious of the success of this plan, officers of the trades and labor congress are determined to make every effort to minimize industrial strife, and have nominated John W. Bruce, Toronto, member of the Plumbers' union, and Gustave Francq, Montreal, of the Typographical union, as members of the new commission.

POSTAL STRIKE UPHELD.

Toronto, Canada, Aug. 17.—Responsibility for the strike of postmen throughout the Dominion is placed at the door of the government, by the Toronto Globe.

"With eight cabinet ministers overseas at one time matters which should have been attended to at home were allowed to drift," says this paper.

"The postoffice department was without head and any real management. The bonus allowed by parliament to the letter carriers was not paid. Their representations, made to the government from time to time, were apparently shelved and neglected. To arouse a lethargic administration the men finally took drastic action. The strike, backed as it was, by the sympathy and support of the overwhelming mass of public opinion, was effective in awakening the ministers at Ottawa.

"The government should realize that the responsibility for the whole trouble rests directly upon its own failure to do its duty. Having been in the wrong it should have been manly enough to confess its fault and remedy it as speedily as possible."

MOONEY'S RE-TRIAL URGED.

San Francisco, Aug. 17.—In one of the largest mass meetings ever held in this city, trade unionists urged that a new trial be given Thomas J. Mooney, now in San Quentin penitentiary, under sentence of death. President Murphy, of the California state federation of labor, said that the workers did not require the Oxman letters to prove Oxman a liar.

"We knew instinctively the moment we read his evidence that he was a rank perjurer," he said. "The glaring contradictions in the evidence in the Billings and Mooney cases imposed a moral obligation upon us both as citizens of California and as trade unionists to see that both these defendants got new and impartial trials. The president has been attacked and insulted for his action in demanding a new trial.

"The fair, square American way of settling the Mooney case is a new trial, and labor is determined that Mooney shall have that and the whole infamous frame-up exposed in open court."

BOWEN GOES TO ENGLAND.

Indianapolis, Aug. 17.—Wm. Bowen, president of the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers' International union will accompany the special labor mission of the A. F. of L. to England, where he will attend the convention of the British Trades Union Congress as fraternal delegate from the A. F. of L. President Bowen and President Franklin of the Brotherhood of Boiler Makers were elected fraternal delegates to England by the A. F. of L. convention, but the latter's duties in connection with the United States railroad administration makes it impossible for him to leave.

CARPENTERS ADVANCE.

Madisonville, La., Aug. 17.—The Gulf Ship Building corporation has signed a union-shop agreement with its organized carpenters. Rates are advanced to 77 cents an hour for caulkers and 70 cents for carpenters. Apprentices will be paid 50 cents an hour for the first six months, 55 cents the next three months, 65 cents the next three months, and journeymen's rates thereafter. Working conditions established by the government will be maintained.

EVADE FULL-CREW LAW.

Harrisburg, Pa., Aug. 17.—The state public service commission has found the Pennsylvania railroad guilty of violating the state full-crew law. The commission states that "no administrative discretion is lodged with this commission in enforcing the full-crew law." The company has been ordered to operate trains with the required number of men over its Sewickley and Boyer Run branches.

OIL EARNINGS ARE LARGE.

New York, Aug. 17.—The Sinclair Oil and Refining company's net earnings were $11,354,737 in the year ended June 30, an increase of $916,413 over the preceding year.

The company placed $2,639,760 of this amount in a reserve for "wear and tear" of the plant.

MOLDERS LOCKED OUT.

Knoxville, Tenn., Aug. 17.—With one exception every local stove manufacturer has locked out employes who are members of Molders' union No. 203.

COLORED FIREMEN UNITE.

Slidell, La., Aug. 17.—Colored stationary firemen have organized and affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen.

SHIPS ARE PRODUCED BY SWEAT AND GRIME

Washington, Aug. 17.—In a speech in the United States senate Mr. McKellar, of Tennessee, surprised some members of that sedate body by attacking the fiction that captains of industry build ships and produce war munitions. He said:

"We speakers, we congressmen, we newspaper writers, we hired men in high places who spend the people's money as captains of industry exclaim at the top of our voices that we build these ships. What a travesty upon truth!

"Labor builds those ships. It is labor that in sweat and grime and mud digs the raw materials from the bowels of the earth. It is labor that burns, toils and sweats at the furnaces and at the forges to make these raw materials fit for service. It is labor that, with brawn and muscle and skill, fells the trees in the forest, turns them into logs and lumber, and finally manufactures them to fit them to become a part of the finished vessel. It is labor, skilled, patient, plodding, working day by day, that rivets and screws and nails and mortises the various parts and materials into a completed whole. Thus we see that the completed ship is the product of labor.

"And as in the case of ships, so it is with practically all the rest of our war services and our war activities.

"All our munitions of war—the bullets, the cannon, the shells, the guns, the machine guns, the rifles, the railroads, its rolling stock, the clothing, the uniforms, the cantonments, the war vessels, the food for our armies and for our people—are manufactured or produced by the unremitting and patriotic toil of labor.

"The world can never know the weariness, the wear and tear on mind and soul and body of the individuals composing labor who, hour by hour and day by day, in all kinds of weather, in heat and in cold, in rain and in snow, by their indefatigable efforts gather up all of these materials and make them ready for war service.

"It is labor that fills our warehouses with food and raw materials of every description. It is labor that moves these materials over the railroads of our land. It is labor that unloads them from the railroad cars and reloads them on our ships. It is labor that takes care of them and handles them in their perilous journeys across the seas, that unloads them on the other side, and again reloads them in other cars made by labor. It is labor that transports them to the camps for our soldiers.

"The war has brought untold profits to the manufacturers, to those engaged in trade and commerce, and even to those engaged in production. Why should any man begrudge prosperity to the laboring man, who brings about prosperity for all others?"

PREPARE FOR HARDSHIPS.

Washington, Aug. 17.—"The United States must prepare for hardships," is the warning of Bernard Baruch, chairman of the war industries board, and who possibly is better acquainted with war's effect on industry than any other man in America.

"Up to this time," he says, "no man or woman has lacked for anything because of war conditions. It will be otherwise in the future. No one has any idea of the increased demand for military supplies unless he can check up on the flow of requisitions and estimates from the government through this department. And the problem is not alone one of fuel and steel and ordnance and ships; it includes clothing, shoes, foodstuffs—everything that man is accustomed to utilize for his comfort and living.

"Civilian requirements and the non-essential industries must yield to the needs of the military establishment. There is but one important thing before us—to win the war."

LEATHER WORKERS GAIN.

Washington, Aug. 17.—The national harness and saddlery adjustment commission has ordered wages increased to 60 cents an hour for leather workers employed on government contracts. The commission is composed of Maj. Samuel J. Rosensohn, representing the secretary of war; Henry Diegel, representing leather working and saddlery employers, and William E. Bryan, president of the United Leather Workers' International union.

The commission notifies employers not to vary from this award, as "investigation has shown that there are many causes for labor turnover, chief among which have been the different rates of wages, inequality of working conditions and excessively long hours, causing a loss of much energy and consequently reduced production."

WOMEN CHIEFS UNITE.

Washington, Aug. 17.—The formation of an official all-women's council to deal with the problems of women workers is announced by Miss Mary Van Kleeck, director of the women-in-industry service of the department of labor. The council will include the women officials of each of the industrial service bureaus or divisions in the executive departments of the government. The purpose of the council, which is the first body of its kind dealing with women's labor problems, is to work out a program of protection for working women.

GARMENT WORKERS GAIN.

Frostburg, Md., Aug. 17. — Garment Workers' union No. 234 has raised wages 15 per cent. At the end of three months an additional 10 per cent will be paid if a greater production is shown. All strikers will be reinstated, shop committees recognized, and a weekly pay day established. These workers have been on strike for over a month.

STREET CAR MEN UNITE.

Columbus, Ga., Aug. 17.—Street car men in this city have organized despite company opposition.

San Diego, Cal., Aug. 17.—Street car men have organized and affiliated with the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employes.

SMELTER WORKERS UNITE.

Springfield, Ill., Aug. 17.—Smelter employes have organized and affiliated with the International Union of Mill, Mine and Smelter Workers.

GLOVE WORKERS GAIN.

Snohomish, Wis., Aug. 17.—The H. W. Wells Glove company has signed the Seattle wage scale of its organized glove workers.

Interallied Workers Will Confer in London

Washington, Aug. 17.—A special labor mission of the American Federation of Labor, headed by President Gompers, will attend the interallied labor conference to be held in London, Sept. 17, 18, and 19.

President Gompers' colleagues are: C. L. Baine, secretary of the Boot and Shoe Workers' union; John P. Frey, editor of the International Molders' Journal, and Edgar Wallace, editor of the Mine Workers' Journal.

A special labor mission to visit Italy consists of James Wilson, president of the Pattern Makers' league; F. J. McNulty, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; John Golden, president of the United Textile Workers; Michael Green, president of the United Hatters, and Peter Josephine, of the Granite Cutters' association.

Vice President Alpine, of the A. F. of L., will be acting president during the absence of President Gompers.

WOULD CHANGE TAX SYSTEM.

Jefferson City, Mo., Aug. 17.—The Homestead Loan and Land league has filed the necessary petitions to place its program on the ballot for the November elections.

Two constitutional amendments are proposed. The first would create a state fund from which farmers and workers may borrow to secure homes and pay off mortgages. The advocates of this plan say it is only an extension of the federal government's farm loan idea.

The other proposal would tax land according to its unimproved value and not according to its area.

"In other words," says the league, "we propose to tax land value only and to exempt improvements."

It is stated that 2,000 acres in the center of Kansas City is worth more, without considering buildings or other improvements, than all the farm land, exclusive of improvements, in 10 of the best agricultural counties of the state.

"Under our plan," says the league, "the 2,000 acres in Kansas City will pay more taxes than all the farmers in these 10 counties."

The plan has been indorsed by the last two conventions of the Missouri state federation of labor.

CAN'T MAKE AUTOMOBILES.

Washington, Aug. 17.—Manufacturers of passenger automobiles are given an inkling of what a nation can do when at war by an order from the war industries board that they must put their plants on a 100 per cent war work basis not later than January 1, 1919. The manufacturers recently declared in favor of a 50 per cent output of passenger automobiles, but the war industries board says this is merely "a step in the right direction."

The board tells the manufacturers that the material they now use in the construction of cars, excepting steel, will be of little use for war work.

Many of the manufacturers have reported that they have material to operate for several months, but the board indicates that the farsightedness of these employers in stocking up will avail them little, and that their stocks will be taken from them, or at least they will be greatly reduced.

REGULATE WOMEN LABOR.

Albany, N. Y., Aug. 17.—The New York state industrial commission corrects the claim that employers on government work in this state are not subject to New York's labor laws. The commission has instructed its legal department and its inspectors to enforce the state law where women are employed by private contractors on government work.

TRADE UNIONS SUED.

Tacoma, Wash., Aug. 17.—The Carman Manufacturing company has asked the superior court to order the Upholsterers' union and the Timber Workers' union to pay it $20,000.

These unions are charged with taking advantage of war-time conditions to secure the employment of union labor. The company is aggrieved at this attempt to standardize working conditions.

CAPITAL'S CAR MEN MAY NOW JOIN UNION

Washington, Aug. 17.—Because officers of the Washington Railway and Electric company can see a condition when it squarely faces them, they have notified employes that the company has abandoned its individual contracts "for the duration of the war and until further notice."

The announcement is simultaneous with the following declaration by the national war labor board, and which these non-union employes were preparing to take advantage of:

"Where individual employment contracts have been exacted by employment companies they are ordered eliminated for the period of the war on the ground that they constitute an interference with the free right of men to organize."

As a sort of shock absorber for its changed policy, company officials chatter about the open (?) shop while [illegible] adherence to the [illegible] position of the na[illegible]ard.

A [illegible] company was called [illegible] it insisted on indivi[illegible] committee appointed by [illegible] senate investigated the [illegible] the company. In a supplemental report Senators Jones (Washington) and Johnson (California) said:

"It is unfortunate that the modern economic trend of dealings between employers and employes was so little understood, or, being so understood, so wholly disregarded by this railway corporation. By individual agreements employes are left wholly without protection."

The full committee made this reference to the company's imported strikebreakers:

"These strikebreakers, as a class, were brutal, vulgar, dishonest and of the lowest possible type of labor. They appropriated to their own use cash fares without concealment or shame. They were dirty and disreputable. They smoked and used vile and obscene language in the [illegible] of all passengers, including [illegible] some cases they were not [illegible] operate cars."